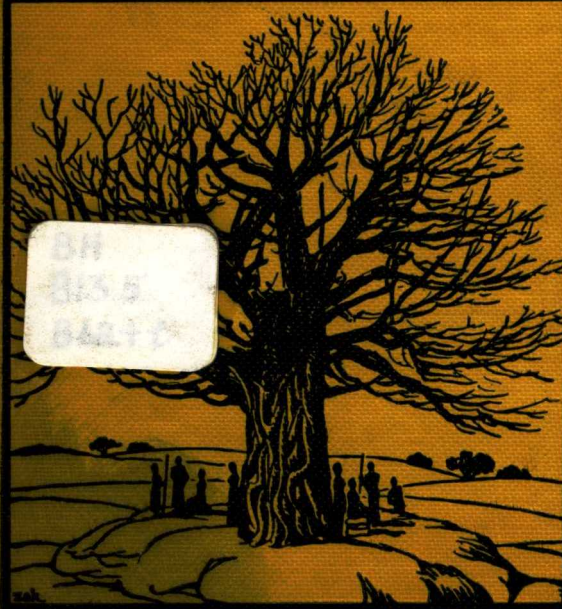
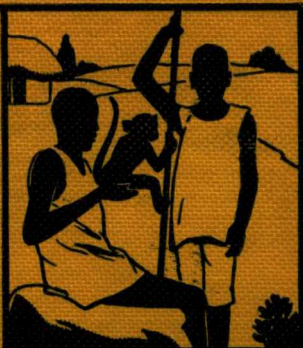


*Land
of the*
**Monkey Bread
Tree**

by
DESMOND W. BITTINGER



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Land of the Monkey Bread Tree

By DESMOND W. BITTINGER

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WALL TO WALL
PAPER

INTRODUCTION

Why Is It Monkey Bread or Baobab Land?

Close up under the Great Sahara Desert where Anjikwi lives it is very hot. The sun smiles down upon the sands and the rocks of Anjikwi's land until the atmosphere shimmers and the entire countryside seems to tremble. The sands burn his bare feet as he shuffles through them and the rocks scorch him when he sits on them. In his country for five months of the year it rains and the grass grows tall. When Anjikwi rides his father's horse to water and stands up on its back he can hardly see out over the top of the grass. During these five months the wild-growing grass and the farms of Anjikwi's people, push the desert's boundaries back toward the north. But when the rains are ended and for nearly seven months there is only heat and drought the grass dries, falls down and twists together to form an almost impenetrable jungle. The farms are harvested and the farm lands become barren. Then the fires start and Anjikwi's land is filled with ashes and smoke. But at night it glows, beautifully lighted by leaping fires stretching for many, many miles in every direction. Then only black ashes and barren hill-tops stretch across Anjikwi's land. Some green appears around a water-hole and along a river course, but apart from these water oases it seems the desert is shifting southward to envelop both

Anjikwi and his country. Fine sand rides the air like a fog and fills his eyes and nostrils.

Two things are exceedingly precious to Anjikwi and to his people as they live in this sand and sweltering heat. One is water; the other is shade. Thus it is that villages grow up close to water-holes and surrounding clumps of trees. The giant and monarch of the country is the Monkey Bread or Baobab tree. It sometimes grows to a diameter of more than ten feet, and since its trunk is not round but, rather, very uneven its girth may be three times that. It bears a fruit that much resembles a loaf of bread hanging from a three foot stem. When there is a breeze these loaves of bread swing on their stems and look like a drove of monkeys dangling by their tails. The monkeys run up the Baobab tree, and drop the fruit loaves to the ground so the hard shell will break open. Then sitting in the branches they feast upon Monkey Bread. It is for this reason the tree is known as the Monkey Bread Tree.

Anjikwi's village, like all the villages of his vast country, sprawls itself around the Monkey Bread Tree. In its shade the chief and village elders conduct the affairs of the village. In its shade Anjikwi will narrate his adventures as he learns new things about life. In its shade the missionary will eventually come to preach the Christian message. And under its spreading limbs will change work its way into the thinking of Africa.

This is why Anjikwi's country is called "The Land of the Monkey Bread Tree."

Land of the Monkey Bread Tree

CHAPTER I

Anjikwi Learns the Wisdom of the Years Under the Monkey Bread Tree

EUROPE is a suckling child, America is an infant just born, Asia and Africa are older and steadier and have mothered us all. The first famous civilization developed in Africa; and away back then Africa knew some things we newer people have not learned. Christ probably took his first tottering steps in African sands, and the first words he tried to say were likely cooed in Africa. While the present white race lived in caves in Western Europe and the writings of these men consisted of rude scratches on the walls of their shady dwellings, the African at Garkida probably sat in the friendly shade of the Baobab or Monkey Bread Tree and, with his bare back wedged into the crevices of its gnarled trunk, smoked his pipe and philosophized on life very much in the same vein as he now does forty centuries later. Let him who goes to the African go humbly, for he comes representing a mechanized civilization that is just now born and already seems to be confused as to how it should grow. Furthermore, he comes to a people who have been sitting under the Baobab trees through the centuries and have philosophical-

ly watched life ebb and flow around them. Through the centuries the monkeys have chattered down to the African from the trees, as he hoed peanuts, and when his back was turned they have jumped down from the tree to pull up the peanuts by the roots, then fled back into the tree and laughed at his futile scolding of them. For centuries the locusts have eaten the products of his farms until it seemed that famine must wipe out the tribe, but stoically he fought his fight for life while Europe fought at the throats of her brothers over the extension of kingship and empire. Through the years under the Baobab tree he has built up a system of philosophy and spirit protection designed to help him survive. There have been few to question it, and those who did were disposed of in the same way that our Christian fathers disposed of dissenters.

Into this land of the Baobab Anjikwi was born one hot noonday. His hair was curly, his eyes like orbs set in black diamond, and his cry lusty. He came into the world, beside the road, while his mother sat down to rest on her way home from market. After the mother had born him and tied him on her back she resumed her journey.

He had many things to learn and he began learning them almost immediately. Charms were put, at once, on his body and when he went to take his meal he had to push charms aside on the breast of his mother. So his religious education began. When he could toddle, he carried a hoe and scratched in the ground beside his mother. He went out with the other lads of his compound and spent the hot day following the goats and sheep, toddling in again at nighttime quite ex-

hausted. He knew how to build a fire almost as soon as he could walk, and almost as soon could, if necessary, prepare his own meal. He did not know it, of course, but at six he was more prepared to be a man in the world than some of his civilized brethren at the end of college.

His religious training came first. He soon learned to recognize a greater Being outside himself who created him and who in some mystical far-off time was near at hand and had made the world a garden of Eden. Then, through the sins of his people, this Being was forced to go far away. He now contemplates his people detachedly, allowing both the just and the unjust to prosper and to suffer. In between that far-off one God and the daily existence of the man under the Baobab, there are many lesser gods, good and bad, who travel to and fro. Anjikwi learned that as the old man in the village becomes older he becomes more a God. And when his years are heavy upon him he is almost a deity. Finally, the body is cast aside and the spirit, now a God, hovers about in the trees of the compound to see if the body is properly buried, whether the libations of beer offered are a generous sufficiency, whether it is black goats and chickens that are killed, and whether the body is properly interred. For a year the spirit hovers closely about until the final dance of burial is at last completed, and then it retires for quieter rest in the sacred ancestral groves. Now the relatives can again breathe with greater ease. If, during the year, some things have not been performed properly in relation to this ancestor spirit he may wreak his vengeance by breaking the calabashes, caus-

ing the death of a child, or, greatest vengeance of all, causing barrenness in woman. Or it may be that the ancestral spirit does not care to rest in comparative obscurity among the other spirits in the sacred grove. He may watch his opportunity to become the spirit of a child, and thus be born into the world a second time. Or, he may take up his abode in the carcass of a crocodile eager to wreak vengeance upon those who do not properly reverence him.

When the new child was born into Anjikwi's compound in the country of the Baobab, he learned that it is important that all the ceremonies be properly observed. For this may be the reincarnation of an ancestor spirit; it may be the birth of a great man who has a contemporary soul in some bush animal that will thereafter be his slave; it may be the birth of an ordinary mortal destined to hoe his way through life with sweat in his eyes; or it may be the birth of an evil spirit destined to kill many men and cause much trouble while in this life.

He learned also that after a year the naming of the child becomes a great occasion, for the priest in charge of the naming ceremony must determine which of the possible births this one was, and give a proper name. If it is a reincarnated ancestor the same name he had before must be given. If a mistake is made the child will frequently cry for days until a new name is given together with some sacrificial honey. When the proper name is given the child will immediately stop crying. (The honey had nothing to do with stopping the crying!) If the child happens to have a contemporary bush spirit it is destined to become a great influence in

the community, much feared. Such a man can order a leopard, or lion, or buffalo, or crocodile who shares a soul with him, to do anything he desires, such as avenging him on his enemies, and it is immediately done! He can have it steal, kill or maim for him without any effort on his part. Of course, if the bush animal becomes sick or tired he too, is sick or tired and if it is killed, he likewise dies.

Anjikwi learns then, that the child grows with his spirit whether he be an ordinary child or whether he be one of the special variety. As he goes about by day he thinks of his shadow as being his spirit. At night when he sleeps and there is no shadow his spirit has left him and gone on devious wanderings of its own. He resents it very much if some one wakes him suddenly for then he may come back into consciousness before his spirit can be called back into his body and there will result the unfortunate circumstance of a body looking for a spirit and a spirit for a body. They may never meet. When he dreams of having gone certain places or done certain things it was simply that his spirit did those things while he was sleeping. He can send his spirit at night to annoy those whom he does not like and the annoyed ones never learn what bothered them. Under proper provocation a night wandering spirit may perpetrate murder. Consequently, Anjikwi, as he grows, is much afraid of the night and any unusual movements of shadows or trees, any light at all (for lanterns and electric lights have not yet found their way into his part of Africa) cause him at once to become filled with terrifying fear. For any one of these may be some night-wandering spirit re-

leased from the body of his enemy, and thus seeking him out to do him harm.

Sometimes also the individual has the power of changing himself temporarily into some animal of the bush, preferably the hyena, and wreaking vengeance on an enemy. Thus one of the boys in Anjikwi's village one time shot his mother-in-law in the hip with an arrow. When brought before the court concerning it he very convincingly maintained that his mother-in-law had changed herself into a hyena and he, not knowing it to be his mother-in-law, had shot the hyena in the hip. Upon running up to see whether his shot had been fatal, he discovered his mother-in-law attempting to wrench the arrow out of her hip and also discovered that she was quite incensed about it.

CHAPTER II

Anjikwi Learns More of the Wisdom of the Years

THUS the whole life of Anjikwi was filled with one form of uncertainty or another. While he was still quite a child his parents began to look about for some marriage arrangement for him. The first thing he learned economically, was that he should begin to grow cotton so that he could begin paying the bride-price or dowry of his intended wife. He must also buy bracelets to give to his mother-in-law and corn to make beer for his father-in-law. This he began at a very early age, and from the age of ten years until he is forty he will likely continue to pay for his wife. If he should decide to take three or four or a dozen wives he will never quite finish the paying of dowries. But it is his system of banking. Money put into the purchase of a wife is always reclaimable should she run away, be stolen by another man, or return home. His only chance of losing it is through the death of the wife, and as yet he has no system of life insurance to cover that contingency. Thus Anjikwi learns his banking lessons and gets ready his pennies in the form of cotton cloth, which he may make himself to pay for his wife. Of course, it is likely that some old man who already has half a dozen wives will take a fancy to the young beauty on whom Anjikwi is paying and since he has the ready cash while Anjikwi has not, the mother-

in-law may make a hurry up bargain and Anjikwi will have to begin all over again on another choice. The privileges of marriage begin as soon as the bride payment is begun, so Anjikwi learns of that side of life at an early age also. After long years of bride payment the week of singing, dancing, beer drinking, and feasting is begun and finished and Anjikwi and the new wife live together in the same house. Soon, however, she must go home again and Anjikwi is left alone for several months. Then he sends for her and she lives with him again, more it is true as a servant, than as a wife. Again, when the first child is born she must go home and stay for some months, and if Anjikwi has not heard of the New Way brought by the foreigner it is now that he takes the second wife. When the first finally returns she finds she is to be in a separate house of her own and a new wife is in the master's house. But if the new wife does not bear the master a child within a year or so she loses her favored position and may be turned away altogether. So Anjikwi goes about growing his cotton and learning all these things.

At two times of the year, when the first rains come and when the first harvests are ripe, Anjikwi is awed by the sacred agricultural ceremonies. The village priest in the presence of the assembled people will pour out libations of beer upon the ancestral stones; he may kill a chicken or even a goat and pour out the blood where he has already poured out the beer. He may spew it from his mouth as rain falling, and always there are mystical things about it of which Anjikwi is very much afraid. This is to cause a great outpouring of rain and blessings on the farm and to appease

the wrath of the gods, for have they not been given chicken and beer? Then talismen or charms are put up in each farm. These can be bought from the witch doctor and they are to ward off all spirits attempting to come and bewitch the soul of the farm and carry it away. The charms are so potent that the gods may strike down with lightning any one who attempts to come courting the soul of the farm in order to carry it away to his own farm. The writer once witnessed lightning kill one boy and almost kill another who were purported to be on this mission, and he saw the subsequent turnout of the village to capture the evil spirit of the corpse in a gourd and carry it away to the far distant bush. To have another speak well of the appearance of his farm is not favored by Anjikwi for it is likely that he is trying to flatter the soul of the farm and thus cause it to follow the flatterer away to his own farm. At harvest time also there are numerous rites which Anjikwi learns to enjoy. The beer from the first corn is brewed and drunk in great solemnity. Men and women, boys and girls, spend the night in wild orgies of complete self-forgetfulness.

After the rains have come, following six or seven months of drought, and the grass is again green and several inches high, Anjikwi prepares himself for one of the most interesting of his yearly experiences. It is time for the entire village to go out for a game drive. First, all weapons must be blessed by the priest. Charms must be secured from the witch doctor, else the game can not be seen or shot, and the propitious time must be announced by the priest. All ready, they go out early in the morning and form a great circle

through the bush, perhaps two miles in diameter. Then, with much shouting, whistling, and bushwhacking they move slowly toward the center until the game is carefully corraled. Then shooting begins. It is likely that when an animal is brought down they may all leap upon it like a pack of hungry wolves, each one slashing for his share. Several people may be badly slashed in the process but that is only incidental to getting a nice piece of meat. That night the village feasts and dances.

Sometimes Anjikwi goes to visit the court and see the revelation and distribution of justice. But here he is afraid for it seems to him that the spirits are very close and they are always objects of fear and dread. The participants, or witnesses, take their oaths by a god, a sword, or lightning, indicating that they wish to die by one of these methods if they are not telling the truth. The final test of truth is called "cutting a haptu." It consists in the witness going before a shrine of the ancestors and there taking a sacred oath that his story is the truth. If it is not, the swearer will immediately fall down dead and the entire family will be lowered in its standing. Anjikwi has heard of many such deaths and there is so much fear of this "haptu" that innocent men will proclaim themselves guilty rather than face the "haptu." Or, the trial may take the form of drinking the poison cup. In this, all the people involved in the trial, accused, accuser, witnesses and judge may partake of the cup together. The ones vomiting it are innocent and the ones not vomiting it are buried. Another form of testing guilt is to kill a chicken and let it flop around in its death struggles as chickens do; if it comes to rest

finally on its back the accused is guilty. If it comes to rest on its feet he is innocent. Anjikwi also sees swimming a crocodile infested river, or thrusting a hand in boiling water to recover an ax head and so on, as means of determining guilt or innocence.

Anjikwi is always impressed by the many sacred preparations for warfare against the various enemies. More faith is placed in the power of jujus against the enemy than in the skill of the combating soldiers. Victory is attributed to medicine rather than to skill or numbers.

He learns early the use of jujus and fetishes. As soon as he is born fetishes are fastened on to his hair and every time he scratches his leg a fetish is tied around it near the wound. These fetishes are very sacred and can be secured from the witch doctor for a price. He must have a fetish for each separate disease that he might get—for protection from death by lightning, drowning and so on. These he wears day and night.

Anjikwi also learns about the sacred mountains and ancestral groves. He does not go near these often, but before he goes on a journey or undertakes a new adventure he goes and offers a chicken or a gift of cotton and beer that his success in the undertaking may be assured.

Sometimes he watches the rainmaker at work. The rainmaker spews water from his mouth or the blood of a chicken in an imitation of rain and after various ceremonies the rain is supposed to come. If it does not come it is likely because some one has bewitched the season and is withholding the rain. Anjikwi does not

care to go to the rainmaking ceremonies often for fear he will be accused as the witch.

When Anjikwi gets to be about twelve or fourteen years old he is taken away by the priest into the bush school and here he is taught the sacred history and responsibilities of manhood in the tribe. At this time he may be circumcised and he must not go near any girls or women. Especially must he not speak to any of them for a period of a month or so. If he can pass all these initiatory rites he comes back to the tribe a man, but if he fails in any of them he must try again in a year. His sister also is taken to the bush school, taught by a priestess and she too must learn the responsibilities of womanhood. In some tribes the girls are likewise circumcised.

From the beginning of childhood up to the entrance of manhood his life is one long school. He must learn everything a man needs to know, and most of all he must learn that all life is tied up to a spirit. His religion is the biggest thing in his life; no part of his life is lived apart from it.

One day Anjikwi heard that several miles away in another village a strange white man had come and was trying to learn his language. Around the campfires for weeks the discussion was about the white man; why he had come, from where he had come, his clothes, his home, and so on. The opinion was about equally divided as to whether he had come up from a hole in the ground, and was consequently bleached out so badly, or whether he had come down from the clouds where the sun could not hit him. But the opinion was united that he had never been a child, that he had no children

nor could he have any. All white men came from somewhere, just like that. As for Anjikwi, he was afraid to go to see the white man and it was many moons before he knew more about him than what he heard his elders say.

CHAPTER III

What Anjikwi Saw in the Monkey Bread Country

AFTER the corn had all grown tall enough that it need not be hoed any more Anjikwi begged his sisters to look after the sheep and goats for several days while he went round to the place where the strange bleached-out folk lived. He had been thinking of it for a great number of weeks and had mentioned it to his comrades several times. They had all cautioned him against it, saying that their fathers had told stories of the long ago times when just such people came into the country and captured all the strong looking young men and women and led them away to places from which they never returned. They told, too, of having heard of hunters coming across a line of twenty or more skeletons in the deep forest all chained together by chains of iron round their now bleached and gnawed neck bones. And of how these hunters had surmised that the white folk of long ago had chained some group of people to a tree while trying to catch more, and had then been unable to find them again, and the slaves had died of starvation and thirst, or had been killed by wild animals. All in all Anjikwi was quite fearful of the prospects of his proposed trip and postponed it day by day. Now, however, he determined to run all risks and go.

He awoke early on the day planned, bathed himself

in the river in the light of the first streaks of dawn, broke off a twig from a convenient tree and began to brush his teeth with vigor as he marched up the road. He had no need to worry about whether his hair was combed, for he had none. An older companion had scraped it all off his head a day or two previously with homemade knife. Neither had he to bother about getting the knots out of his shoe laces for he had no shoes or laces. In fact, he needed not to worry about tearing his shirt and trousers as he pulled them over his damp body after his bath for he had no shirt and no trousers. Yet he felt no lack of clothing due either to climate or social custom. To him and to his people the human body, as glistening ebony in the sweat of honest toil, is beautiful and the only excuse for clothes is to demonstrate affluence. Often at night, though, when the cool damp air came off the lowlands he wished he had a blanket to wrap about himself.

Day was far advanced by the time he arrived at the village where the white man was living. He approached with some fear and hesitancy but he saw about him other boys and girls, most of whom wore small bits of cloths, going about with apparent lack of fear; so he calmed himself and followed them. He approached what seemed to him a gigantic house, the like of which he had never seen before. It was square instead of round. It had large openings through which one could enter, some of the openings coming all the way down to the ground so that one could walk in, others coming only halfway down so that one must crawl up to get in. He did not understand why they were not all that way for whoever heard of entering

a house standing upright? Always one crawls through a small hole putting in first the foot, then the head and shoulders and drawing in the other foot last. Also it appeared that one could stand upright in this house, and that, to him, was another strange thing. The roofs seemed very high and they were not circular. The grass thatch on them was extremely thick and he wondered when the white man found time to cut all that grass and sew it together before putting it on the roof. He approached quite close to the large house and studied it intently, saying nothing, but striking his hand over his mouth and murmuring over and over "Ya, ya, ya!"

In the midst of this semi-daze there suddenly rang out, seemingly from a place almost over his head, a terrific boom, boom, booming. His reflexes were fast now for the instincts of self-preservation were functioning. He dropped, panting, into the first tall bunch of grass and hugged the ground. From all around he heard the cries of the people. He was sure now that all the dire things he had been told at home would happen to him here had already begun to happen. The booming noise must surely be the long guns he had heard about and the cries of the people cries of fright. As for him, he was too frightened to cry out. The booming ceased and the shouting people began to come nearer. As Anjikwi flattened himself in the grass he began to notice with some surprise that instead of being cries of panic that receded as the frightened people got farther away, the cries seemed to indicate delight and were coming toward the building from which he had just fled. He raised himself on an elbow

and noticed that a great group of children no larger than he, were coming to the building, each with a hoe or sickle, and that they were going fearlessly inside and coming out again without their implements. He noticed, too, that on top of a long pole a curious contraption was dangling. It was made of what appeared to be the same sort of iron as that from which they made their hoes. Also, it was about at the place where he heard the gunshots. The boys went off to another large building, of which there seemed to be many, and the girls to still another. They seemed to be happy and unafraid.

Rather ashamed of himself for his impetuous flight, he slipped out of the grass, still not without some qualms, and went toward the place where all the boys had gone. He tried to slip unobtrusively into their midst, and succeeded in doing so. But when he saw that some were taking food off the fire and dishing it out to others the pangs of hunger generated by his early rising and long walk caused him to shove up close beside a boy who looked friendly and who had, between his feet before him, a generous sized gourd of guinea corn mush. The boy looked at him a few moments and then without any questions said: "Eat food." Each realized he was going to have only half of what was intended for one, so they tarried not long for the other. When the gourd was licked clean he asked his new friend: "What was all the noise I heard just before we ate, and why did everyone come singing or shouting?" He was informed that it was the food bell and that everyone quit work then and came for food. That, furthermore, another would ring

soon and then they would all go into the school. He asked: "Who makes you work, and do they beat you when you do not work hard enough?" He was again informed that they did not have to work, but worked because they wanted to and on Saturday they were paid as much as from four to six cents for their work. Any who wanted to quit work could, and any who did not like work did not need to come at all, but if they did not work they did not get pay. He asked further: "But what do you do with as much as four to six cents? Even my father seldom has that much money and I never have had any." Again he was informed. Anjikwi learned they bought books and pencils for school and paid their school fees. What was left over they took to their parents, or used it to buy clothes. This matter of school fees was getting a bit deep for Anjikwi. Just then the bell rang again and he started up with fright. Laughed at by all the boys, he sat down again. "Come along to school," one of them said as they trooped off, but he felt just now that he would like to get off into his clump of grass and think things over a bit.

All day long he watched them. He saw them stand up in straight lines and go through the same motions that another black boy out in front went through. He saw them stand up, and looking into a book, speak as if it told them what to say. He saw them take something white in their hands and, going to the wall, make white marks and then others of them seemed to know what these white marks said. Once he heard the boy in front say: "If a man had five horses and sold two how many would he have left?" He wondered who

might have five horses and decided it must be some king. He thought what powerful jujus and medicine these folks must have, to make marks and have them speak, to look in books and have them speak. No wonder they all looked well.

Toward evening he heard a bell ring and saw the black children all go into one long building until it was full. There seemed to be more children here than there were people in his whole village. Then they started to sing. It sounded pretty, and, summoning his courage, he left his clump of grass, for good now, and went in, sitting down at the rear on a seat already twice too full.

The book spoke some more, they bowed their heads and some one seemed to be talking to an important person that was there some place. He thought it must be a king until the speaker called him "Father." He looked but could not see anyone. This was all very strange. Then the white man got up and he almost fled again for he had not seen the white man before. But he seemed to be able to speak Anjikwi's language for Anjikwi could understand him. The white man said that it was good that so many came to school so they could learn to understand what the Book said to them. But that all the things they learned in school were like polishing a lantern and shining the globe. It would look real nice then but unless the Unseen Person to whom they had just spoken put fire in the lantern at nighttime it would give off no light and if set in a path, instead of lighting the path, folks would come along at night and fall down over it. Thus it would not be performing its work as a lantern. Anjikwi

was not sure that he knew what a lantern was but everyone else seemed to know. He determined to find out.

Then they went out. A drum beat and they all marched to the drum. This he could do as well as they and the slap, slap of the several hundred feet in the sand in time with the drum, was music to his ears. Presently they went to a large field cleared off, with some posts at either end and they began to try to kick a large ball toward these posts. But when they got it near some other boys kicked it away again. Anjikwi could not understand this for if they wanted it through the posts why did they not all kick it or carry it in that one direction.

The sun was sinking low and Anjikwi slowly walked toward home. His head was full of a good many things. And he had not found out what a lantern was!

CHAPTER IV

Anjikwi's Sister in Monkey Bread Country

At home that night Anjikwi had many words to say. Even the old people of the village were eager to crowd about and hear of what he had heard and seen and thought. He greatly enjoyed his sudden rise to prominence and what he saw became more wonderful at each telling. The two blind men of the village listened and doubted. The lepers in the delapidated houses behind the compound were interested, too, in the strange things that were happening in their land where change had so long been unknown.

The one thing at which they all marveled most was the place these strange white folk were giving to girls. They seemed to actually believe that they, also, could learn to read. When he saw the sensation it created, Anjikwi dwelt at length on how he saw girls going in the classes with boys and how he saw them stand up and have the book talk to them as well as to the boys. He also told how he had heard that at some little distance from the boys' sleeping building there was also a girls' sleeping building and that there a half hundred or so girls slept, and cooked their own food. He heard that they were learning to make nice things with grass and reed and that they had their own gardens.

In the group who listened so closely to his words, there sat one little girl, his sister, Kubili, who listened even more intently than the rest. And when Anjikwi

spoke of the school for girls she had ears for nothing else. Long after Anjikwi was fast asleep as a result of his journey and monologues, his sister lay awake thinking. She did not fall asleep until she had made a firm resolve to go and try to get into the girls' school. She did not broach the subject for a good many days. Then timidly she asked her mother whether, if she helped to wash out all the cucumber seed within the next week, she could then go and spend a week at the school Anjikwi had told about. Usually Kubili had begged to be allowed to do something else when it was cucumber washing time, for she very much disliked the horrible odor of washing the seeds out of rotted cucumbers. Now that she offered to help, her mother felt that indeed she wanted to go to school, and consented.

During the week she also washed her few clothes, beating them out on the stones with all her strength. The village watched her go with a bit of awe, wondering what it would be possible for a girl to learn. As for her, in spite of her attempts to appear quite brave and dauntless, she had many inward tremors as she walked the long road to the new adventure.

It took her nearly half a day, after she arrived at the village of the schools, to find the right school, and after that to get up enough courage to more than approach close to it. But finally she went through a big door and saw inside the wall a scene much as at home. Pots were on the fire, gourds were on a rack and from another building she heard the musical sound of grinding stones accompanied by the same chant she always sang when she rubbed the small stone across the burr. There

were fifty girls getting supper. The odors were home-like.

A kindly looking black lady approached her and asked her name and village. In a gush she began to tell all about herself and Anjikwi's experience and her hopes for the week. The black lady informed her that they were forced to turn away all girls who came to school because they had no more room. But Kubili begged so hard to stay that the black lady said she might stay the night, and that she would ask the white teacher lady in the morning whether she might not stay longer since no boys or girls had come from her village to school before. She slept more comfortably on the smooth board given her that night than she had for a long time before, and awoke hoping very much to be allowed to stay the week. When the white teacher lady said she could she was overjoyed and determined to learn many things that week. She helped to sweep the compound and then took her hoe and set to work digging grass and working on the bad places in the roads around the schools.

When the bell rang for school she was not frightened, for she knew what to expect. In school she saw the picture of a woman with a child on her back. The woman was supposed to be cooking corn mush. She had to be shown, of course, at first that this was what it was, for she could see nothing but black and white blotches. She had never seen a picture or even paper before. But soon the picture took form, and she was told that the peculiar marking down at the side of the picture said: *A Woman Cooks Food*. She learned to read these words the first day. When all the boys and

girls went into the big building she followed a new found friend and listened to a big boy read out of a book, then kneel down and speak to someone, thanking this One for blessings and asking for continued remembrances.

The week was fuller for her than any week she had ever spent. Kubili went home on Saturday to tell some remarkable stories and make a sincere plea that she might be allowed to go again for another week. Her father said, that such things were not according to native customs and that it would overthrow all the fine things that the centuries had built up; that what the fathers had done was certainly what the sons and daughters should do; and what was the use, anyhow, of doing anything for girls and women since they were only sheep or goats? But Kubili's mother was very much interested in the nice varicolored grass basket that her daughter had brought home. When Kubili showed her how to make such a basket, but confessed that she did not yet know how to make the lid, her mother said she might at least go back long enough to learn that much. Father, with a grumbled "foolishness of women," washed his hands of the whole thing.

But into Anjikwi's head had crept ideas. Why should not he go too?

CHAPTER V

Father and Mother Hear Strange Things Under the Monkey Bread Tree

WHEN Anjikwi returned after several weeks at the mission school, and in the presence of the village elders lounging under the monkey bread tree in the center of the village, displayed a roll of cloth woven about three times as wide as the usual strip of cloth, and having run through it several strings of different color, he created quite a sensation. As the cloth passed from hand to hand there were expressions of incredulity, approval and disapproval. There was long discussion as to whether it would take more or less thread to weave wide than narrow cloth. Anjikwi explained that many others were weaving the same kind of cloth but in different colors from this which he had woven. Then he got out his Bura Primer and read a bit to them and showed them a few pictures, explaining what they were supposed to see and when they at last saw it they laughed long and loud indeed. Several of the village elders, as a result of all this, indicated that they would be willing to let their boys also go to the school for a few weeks when work on the farm was slack.

Around the gourds of food after nightfall, Anjikwi would tell his father and brothers some of the things he was learning about the way to live in Monkey Bread Country. He told about having stubbed his toe, on the ball field, and of having gone to the hospital and how

it healed up in several days instead of becoming a foul smelling ulcer that lasted several months and would probably have caused the loss of the toe. He told about the many people who went into the church on Sunday and how they sang and listened to the white man or some one of the black teachers talk. He told also of the things they talked about and how some people no longer believed in jujus and witch doctors, but seemed to get delight out of believing in Something else that comforted rather than terrified them. Curiosity as much as anything else stirred the old man to hear more. Kubili, meanwhile, had told her mother many of the same things and she likewise was curious to hear more.

One day Anjikwi asked whether the village people would like to have the white man come there and tell them more about the things that had made them curious, and they all said that they would. So with considerable pride and strutting, Anjikwi and several of the other boys closely followed by Kubili and several of the girls escorted the white man with his wife and children into the village. Everyone crowded about to see the woman who could ride a horse and marveled at the children, and especially that they could speak to them and be understood. Then followed the strange business of building a house out of cloth. It seemed strange that one should carry his house with him when he traveled. The white man asked the elders if they could supply food for a few days to the men who had carried his loads and invited them all to come under the Baobab tree that night for a time of singing and talking. They did their work, ate their food early, and came under the tree in great numbers. Then they

learned to sing some new and pleasant songs and listened to some interesting stories and explanations.

After they got home Anjikwi's father complained that such things would certainly destroy all that his fathers had succeeded in building up over the years, and said that he wished the white man would move on. The mother said little except that she could not be sure until she heard more about it. They both went each night and heard more about the white man and the new way of life.

Before he left, the white man asked the elders whether they would not be interested in having a school and church house in their own village so that the children would not have to leave home to go to school. They were eager to try this and said they would build a house in the next month, and that many of their children would go to school. Some of the old men also consented to give it a try.

When the schoolhouse was finished and the teacher ready to begin, Kubili, who was now at home to attend this school, begged her mother to go and try it too. So tying her youngest baby on her back, and Kubili tying another on hers, they set out. Several older men and women were there and they learned that day from charts and pictures on the wall. They also learned about some people who lived long ago and saw pictures of them on the wall. Several commented on how good it would have been if they too could have pictures of their old men who lived long ago.

As the days went by some of the older men and women dropped out or were very irregular in attendance, but Kubili and her mother continued regular and

learned to read everything that was presented. After quite a long time they told the white man one day when he came that they would like to make a formal declaration before the village that they wanted to associate themselves with this New Way. After instructions they stood up before the assembled village and in a solemn moment made such declaration.

But father shook his head at all this and with his thumb nail shot more snuff up his nose than was his usual wont. At first he debated whether he should put Kubili's mother outside his compound in the place of the disapproved wife, but when she continued to be an even better wife than she had been before, he decided to wait a while.

CHAPTER VI

Sickness in Monkey Bread Land

ANJIKWI began begging his father to allow him to go to the hospital and learn how to do medicine so he could come back home and dispense help to the village of his people. The father felt that if he wanted to do medicine he had better do the kind they knew about long ago and become a witch doctor. In his turn he tried to persuade Anjikwi along that line.

As a result of this strange turn of events in his family, and the looks of askance that some of the villagers gave him under the monkey bread tree, as if to ask how much farther he was going to allow such a thing to go, Anjikwi's father took to rising very early and going out with his bow and arrow for long solitary hunts. He had some success in capturing game but he did not have so much success in thinking out a satisfactory solution to his problem. Once in a while Anjikwi would accompany him, but Anjikwi did not seem too eager to go, for then he had to miss the call to morning prayers and a day of school. The fact that these seemed preferable to a good day of hunting seemed very strange to the father. Rising a bit earlier than usual one morning the father found himself warm and very wet with perspiration, for he slept in a round mud house without windows and with a grass mat completely closing the door. He stepped out quickly with bow and arrow and set off rapidly for the bush. Before

evening he felt very hot and was bothered with a severe headache. That night he did not feel like eating but he slept fairly well. Next morning he again set off, though realizing that he had a terrible cold. He succeeded in getting down a very large antelope that day and by the time he had run home to get help to carry it in and they had cooked it and eaten it, drinking along with it several good sized pots of beer, it was nearly morning. He slept but little the remainder of the night and in the morning was unable to arise. He called for the witch doctor and had a number of jujus made to cure him of what he did not know was pneumonia. Not improving during the day he had the witch doctor come back again at night. He was then burned with hot irons, beaten about the head and chest, made to drink unpleasant concoctions and by morning he was no longer conscious of what was going on about him. Meanwhile Anjikwi had asserted himself and set off on a run to get the white doctor. It was more than a day before the doctor got there, but fortunately Kubili and her mother had put away all the disagreeable things insisted on by the witch doctor, and were ready to co-operate fully with the white doctor.

Some time later when the father was able to be up a bit they decided to take him to the hospital for treatment for further ailments the doctor said he had. He went, supported on a donkey. He was fearful about it and only the consideration that the doctor had unquestionably saved his life, and now wanted him to come, persuaded him to go.

At the hospital he saw a bed for the first time and

many other things that made him marvel. Not the least of these things was the great number of folks who came there daily for treatment. He also got some very good help on his problem from the doctor's wife who came every day to tell them stories about life and things of long ago. He got injections and saw that here cleanliness, and not mysticism and fear were the main things. The pain he had had for so many years in his abdomen left him surprisingly soon. He worked about the compound to pay for his medical treatments and soon felt that his purposes were one with this mission station. He learned what each house was for and who lived on each hilltop. He saw dry season gardens and visited the school. He went to church. When the time came to go home he wished he could think of further reasons to stay.

Someone who knew he had a brother who was a leper suggested that he go by the leper colony on the way home and see what he thought of it, and that if he liked it he ask his brother to come. He stopped outside and looked over the colony. There seemed to be hundreds of lepers there and they all seemed to be busy about their farmwork, working on roads, or sweeping up in the village. The place was clean and everyone seemed to be cheerful and well content. They seemed to be well clothed and well fed. He was surprised, for he had always seen lepers naked, full of sores, and foul smelling. He approached a few who were fellow tribesmen and asked them about their homes. He was surprised to learn that they had a school, a place to make chairs and so on, a good hospital where they got medicine regularly and a church

of more than a hundred members. He was surprised also to learn that instead of having to pay for all this, it was free; and in addition they were given a subsistence, with which to buy food each week, by the government. He went away feeling that he would ask his brother to come, and felt a little better about having to pay taxes to the government. He felt now too that perhaps it was not so much of a tragedy to have the missionaries change a few things from the old days as long as their changes seemed to be for the better.

In the following weeks, in spite of the questioning glances of his fellow villagers, he always answered the morning prayer call and attended church and the school. At every small excuse he walked the hot miles to the mission station. He took his brother to the leper colony and went every week or so to watch him get better and hear him tell of his different outlook on life.

After a good many moons he decided with his brother that they would each make a declaration of their desire to ally themselves with this New Philosophy. It would be only a beginning and they would be open minded for new truth and happier outlooks. When they met again after making their declarations, one at the leper colony, and one in his village, each was delighted with the greater feeling of freedom brought about by a divorce from the fears of mysticism and witchery.

Two old men had found the good life. This is how it came about that Anjikwi got to go down to learn the hospital work.

CHAPTER VII

Up and Down Through Monkey Bread Country

IN his several years' experience in the mission hospital Anjikwi learned many things, some of which seemed to him foolish and others not so foolish. He learned that it is wise to boil drinking water because his country is full of intestinal parasites and nearly everyone of his countrymen is afflicted with them. He learned to look through a microscope and see for himself the things about which the doctor spoke. He learned of the necessity of cleanliness, how to dress a wound or an ulcer, and how to set up a sterile table for the doctor when he wanted to operate. He saw people come to the hospital hopelessly sick and go away well and with new thoughts stirring their minds. He saw forty-pound tumors, caused by elephantiasis, removed and the patients recover. He saw amputations and many other forms of surgery. He even saw those who were blind made to see. The major part of his own work was the dressing of ulcers and he came to understand that they were not caused by evil spirits and curable only by charms, but that they were caused by lack of care when one was wounded and that they were curable by cleanliness. He saw the precautions the white folk took to keep well and got a clearer idea of what they were trying to do for his people.

Most of all through the years he enjoyed the treks or

safaris taken by the doctor out over the country of the monkey bread tree. The doctor rode a horse and some dozen men or so carried his supplies or equipment on their heads. Anjikwi usually walked close to the doctor's horse and carried a lantern for him to use at night. This traveling about meant swimming rivers, sometimes several in a day, and it meant climbing up almost impassable mountain paths. But he enjoyed being the center of attraction when he got into the villages, and so he helped to overcome the villagers' fear so that they would come for medicine, even if somewhat tremblingly, and not a little skeptically.

He particularly liked to tell about one trip they took down into a country where cotton and cloth had not yet found their way to any great extent, and where skins of animals were not used for clothing. The natives were naked and seemed not to know it until they saw other black men clothed. But lack of clothing did not keep them from having highly artistic temperaments and he marveled at the beauty of their compounds and the arrangements within, and their skill in iron and brasswork.

One village where they spent several days was set on seven hills and each hill had its own council tree. Under these trees the doctor examined about 1,200 people. It did not take so long since they did not need to bother to undress anybody. Out of the twelve hundred, more than half were suffering from yaws and syphilis. He saw some patients come with half their faces fallen away and their bodies rotting. Others came with dried up and broken ribs exposed to the air. Others came with feet fallen off. He learned that this disease was

comparatively new in this village and that it had been brought to that town by several traders. He also learned that the disease was originally introduced to Africa by the white man, and that in a society where adultery in the unmarried is not a misdemeanor, it had spread like wildfire and become a greater scourge than leprosy. He was sorry that the white man had introduced a number of diseases against which his people had not been able to build up a resistance, and which were consequently fatal to large numbers, but he realized that his people were endangering the white man with far more diseases than the white man was bringing to him. And he knew the white man through his Christ was bringing a solution for many of the diseases and disasters which were threatening to extinguish his race.

All in all Anjikwi heard many things, though not half of them were about medicine. When he went home to salute his people he found changes creeping into his village with startling rapidity. But everyone seemed happier and quite full of varied subjects for discussion.

Anjikwi felt that it was good.

CHAPTER VIII

Change in Monkey Bread Country

THE years brought changes in Baobab land. In the ten years following Anjikwi's first timid venture to the village of the mission more changes took place in his country than had taken place in several centuries before. First the boys and girls learned to write and soon afterward the paths were full of children hurrying here and there with notes, for to have one's voice speak for one in a place where he was not, was a marvel more wonderful than their own ancient witcheries. Then other mission stations sprang up over the countryside and people of other localities also learned to read and write. When a messenger traveled he was burdened with letters of salutation bearing nothing more than a wish that everyone was well. Still later, boys were sent off to different institutions of higher learning quite some distance away and the complexities of postal runners and postal orders were learned.

The countryside was full of different languages and once in a while a smattering of pidgin English was heard. The English words for things the tribesmen had never seen before were accepted along with the things themselves, and a black man coming into mission territory had almost to learn a new language. With folks from many tribes working at a common task, tribal outlooks enlarged and reduced tribal enmity resulted. Money came into common use and was desired

by all alike. If the tribes did not gather round the church and school, they did gather round the Saturday pay line. Best of all they gathered round the chapel at time of prayer call too.

Diseases began to come under control and no longer did epidemics of smallpox and other diseases devastate the country of its people. Day in and day out there flowed through the hospital a stream of folks desiring treatment for everything from stubbed toes to measles, from whooping cough to chicken pox, leprosy, syphilis, blindness, epilepsy and evil spirits. Some got well and some were buried, but the stream flowed on.

The teacher or white man's yard was full from morning until night, week in and week out, with people who came for the settlement of all sorts of difficulties. These varied from fights to major and minor thefts, to adultery and wife stealing, even to questions of a spiritual, theological and metaphysical nature.

On Sunday the citizens of Baobab country came out in great numbers to the church. Work was laid aside, impressive, almost unimaginable amounts of clothes were put on, and the drab interior of a plain mud church with mud seats became a riot of color and a sanctuary of perfume. But the service was reverent and sincere. It seemed to reach a bit deeper into the soil of everyday life than some services on civilization's Broadways. On Sunday, too, a score of boy preachers traversed the country up and down, holding services under twenty Baobab trees in as many villages. Sunday had become a day of rest and worship.

With many of the changes Anjikwi was well pleased,

as were also his countrymen. But there were some that he hoped would not be permanent. He saw growing up about the mission a group of folk who were becoming mission dependents. They were forgetting their old trades, and when the mission had no work for them they were without work. He knew nothing about civilization's unemployment situation and his country never had any such problem, but he saw the roots of it growing and it disturbed him. He saw his own crafts and culture being neglected in the wild struggle for imported culture and imported things. He saw the white man working hard trying to manage and direct a sudden and new rise to what he had heard called civilization, but what seemed to him a kind of instability.

But he heard the teacher again and again outline the hope for the future, and it so well fit his own life that he himself might have originated it. Certainly this hope sprang from his own people.

It seemed to Anjikwi that the need was to put Christ on the farm and on the threshing floor, and not only in the school or the mission compound. He felt there was need to keep the Baobab people's feet rooted deep in the soil. More effort should go to enrich the culture of his people, rather than to destroy it. Thus would the white man's civilization and thinking be enriched also. It seemed to Anjikwi that the ideal way would be to take away centralization around a mission station, and make it rather a headquarters for a widespread church and educational work. The need was to head everything up in the black men of Baobab country, rather than in foreign white men. He hoped to see a community health consciousness spread up and down the

land, with a church and a school in every village. The purpose of change he believed to be to enrich, rather than to arbitrarily change life. Thus might the Boabab folk grow their own future which would be one gloriously filled with the spirit of an unselfish Christ and a loving Father.

Toward this end Anjikwi and the teachers work. And as to its value in an unsteady and confused world they have high hopes.

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